UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/193/Add.3
12 September 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Forty-sixth session

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA

Letter dated 10 September 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have pleasure in transmitting to you a note from Mr. Gabriel Coderch Díaz, Coordinator of the O.A. Romero Study and Solidarity Group, concerning the economic embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba; I believe that it should be brought to the attention of the representatives of Member States (see annex).

Accordingly, I request that you be kind enough to have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON de QUESADA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 5 September 1991 from the Coordinator of the O.A. Romero Study and Solidarity Group addressed to the Secretary-General

In view of the forthcoming session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, we request that an item concerning the unjust economic embargo and blockade against Cuba by the Government of the United States of America be included in the agenda of that session.

We are requesting this as members of the Catholic Church in Cuba, for we are concerned about our brothers and about being true to the Spirit and are in communion with our bishops; the latter protested against the embargo in April 1969, stating that it was an attack on life, God's greatest gift. It is also a violation of the wish of the Holy Father, John Paul II, who has insistently called for peace among peoples and for frontiers to be open arms to reconciliation rather than areas of tension. Moreover, we have noted that our peoples have a deep longing for peace.

We renew our efforts and our prayers for that peace which comes from God and we pray that an end may be put to the very inhuman and unchristian embargo which has been making life difficult for millions of children and old people, women and men, for more than 30 years.

May God guide you and bless your efforts, for "blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9).

UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/193/Add.4
12 September 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Forty-sixth session

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA

Letter dated 10 September 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am pleased to transmit to you a letter from Bishop Joel E. Ajo Fernández of the Methodist Church of Cuba, the text and annexes of which concern the economic embargo imposed against Cuba by the United States. I feel that they should be brought to the attention of the representatives of Member States (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a General Assembly document.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON de QUESADA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 30 August 1991 from the Bishop of the Methodist Church of Cuba addressed to the Secretary-General

We were pleased and heartened to hear that the representative of our people and Government to the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Ricardo Alarcón, will request the General Assembly of that Organization, over which you preside, to include an item on the embargo against Cuba and the total elimination thereof.

We are writing to you to inform you of the declaration made by the Methodist Church of Cuba at its latest Annual Conference, held from 12 to 16 June 1991 (appendix I).

For your information, we are also enclsoing copies of the declarations issued by the College of Bishops of the Methodist Church of Latin America at its latest meeting, held in Antigua, Guatemala, on 15 August 1991 (appendix II) and by the Meeting of the Methodist Churches of Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States of America, Canada and England, held in Antigua, Guatemala from 10 to 17 August 1991 (appendix III).

We pray that the prophetic voices echoing in both the North and the South may be heard in the United Nations General Assembly, so that truth and justice may triumph and our Cuban people may shape their destiny without interference, embargoes or impositions of any type.

We take this opportunity to convey to you the renewed assurances of our highest consideration and we pray that God may guide you in your mission.

APPENDIX I

Statement of the position of the Methodist Church with respect to the blockade against Cuba

(Havana, 15 June 1991)

The Assembly of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church of Cuba, meeting at the premises located at 25 and K, Vedado, Havana, from 12 to 16 June 1991, and having been consulted on the question of the commercial blockade against Cuba, has resolved to issue the following declaration expressing its position in principle with regard to this matter. Jesus Christ was sacrificed on the cross to redeem and save man from his sinful condition and to raise him to the full stature of a human being. The Methodist Church of Cuba advocates the total elimination of the North American trade embargo against our country.

The reasons for our rejection of the blockade are as follows:

(1) The blockade has a degrading effect on the people of our country, since it denies them the possibility of survival, health and development.

(2) Its affects children, the elderly and society as a whole, which is being subjected to economic strangulation.

(3) Our Methodist social doctrine holds that any act which tends to reduce man to a subhuman condition is an act against the Creator.

APPENDIX II

Declaration issued by the Council of Bishops and Heads of Churches of the Council of Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean

Solidarity with the Republic of Cuba

WHEREAS:

1. The economic marginality of Latin America is a sign of repression;

2. The economic blockade of Cuba, led by the United States, is a cruel means of causing death;

3. The Methodist Church of Cuba is committed to the struggle to suspend the economic blockade;

4. As Methodist Evangelical Churches, we form a united continental ecclesiastical body, and solidarity is built through concrete action;

5. The General Conference of the United Methodist Church of the United States has voted in favour of the request to lift the blockade;

The Council of Bishops and Heads of Churches of the Council of Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean resolves:

I. To pledge to fight, through the efforts of its national churches at various levels, to secure the lifting of the economic blockade against Cuba;

II. To propose that the Council of Methodist Churches in Latin America, as the continental ecumenical body, make a similar pledge, to support the Methodist Church of Cuba in its efforts to secure the lifting of the economic blockade against Cuba;

III. To submit this proposal for cooperation to the Methodist Church of Cuba for its information;

IV. To invite the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church, the United States Board of International Ministries and the United Church of Canada to join in this effort;

V. To affirm and defend the sovereign right of the Cuban people to decide their own destiny without foreign interference.

Document approved in special session by the Council of Bishops, done at Antigua, Guatemala, on 15 August 1991.

(Signed) Secundino MORALES
Secretary

(Signed) Raul RUIZ AVILA
Vice-President

(Signed) Aldo M. ETCHEPOYEN
President

APPENDIX III

Public Declaration of the Meeting of Methodist Churches

(Antigua, Guatemala, 16 August 1991)

On 14 August 1991, in Antigua, Guatemala, the Council of Bishops of the Council of Methodist Churches in Latin America and the Caribbean signed a declaration in support of the people of Cuba.

In solidarity with the Cuban people, and endorsing the terms of the above-mentioned declaration, the Meeting of Methodist Churches held in Antigua, Guatemala

CALLS FOR:

1. An end to the unjust and prolonged blockade against Cuba, promoted by the United States of America, which is affecting the lives of our Cuban brothers.

2. The support of all the countries of the Americas and the Caribbean for the people of Cuba, so that they may freely and wisely determine their destiny, without pressure or threats of intervention.

Bishop Aldo ETCHEGOYEN
Council of Methodist Churches in
Latin America and the Caribbean

Rev. C. Evans BAILEY
Methodist Church in the Caribbean
and the Americas

Bishop Melvin TALVERT
United Methodist Church
of the United States

Mrs. Rosemary WASS
Methodist Church of
Great Britain

Rev. Tom EDMONDS
United Church of Canada

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GENERAL

A/46/193/Add.5
12 September 1991
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ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Forty-sixth session

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NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA

Letter dated 10 September 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a note addressed to you by the Reverend Raúl Suárez Ramos, Director of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Centre, which relates to the economic embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and which, for that reason, I believe should be brought to the attention of the representatives of Member States (see annex).

Accordingly, I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCÓN de QUESADA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 29 August 1991 from the Director of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Centre addressed to the Secretary-General

Considering the sacred mission entrusted to the United Nations by all peace- and justice-loving peoples, and that the Organization constitutes an international forum which can make possible a world of fraternal relations between nations, I am addressing you in my capacity as Director of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Centre.

For more than three decades, our people has suffered the consequences of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by various Administrations of the United States Government. These measures, and the constant pressures which are exerted in order to impose a particular political point of view offend our Christian conscience and the ethical convictions which we hold as followers of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. There is no moral reason which justifies the violation of the rights of a country, however small it may be, because it has a different political system.

Expressing the general feeling of our evangelical people, we request that the question of these discriminatory measures should be considered by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session and that the requisite steps should be taken to put an end to them.

UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/193/Add.6
12 September 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Forty-sixth session

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM
IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO
IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA

Letter dated 10 September 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a note addressed to you by the Reverend Orestes González Crúz, President of the Cuban Ecumenical Council, relating to the economic embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba; I believe that it should be brought to the attention of the representatives of Member States (see annex).

Accordingly, I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCÓN de QUESADA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 4 September 1991 from the President of the Cuban Ecumenical Council addressed to the Secretary-General

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they
shall be called the children of God.

Matthew 5:9

We Christians have been discovering the hand of God in the origins of time; He is guiding individuals, peoples and institutions towards the realization of His will, and God's will is that we should all take part in His Kingdom, which is justice, love and peace.

The Cuban Ecumenical Council, an organization uniting churches and institutions which are working for peace and love among men, cannot remain detached when injustice and enmity are violating the life of peoples.

For these reasons, as Christians who belong to the Cuban people, we note with great satisfaction that our Government's representative to the United Nations, Mr. Rafael Alarcón de Quesada, has proposed that the question of the embargo against Cuba be considered by the General Assembly at this session.

We cannot be indifferent to the unjust economic embargo against Cuba, since it has meant that the people have had to pay a high price for these past 30 years and more.

Because it disregards the supreme dignity of man, because of its degrading implications for health, well-being and development and because it violates the right of every human being to life itself, we have decided to address ourselves to you, asking you to heed our plea, as Christians and as Cubans, in order that we may be allowed to determine our future freely and in a sovereign manner.

We believe that there are inviolable principles which identify us as Christians, compelling us to reject the commercial embargo imposed on our country; we know that God will place in your mind and heart the will to ensure that justice shines forth for the good of all our people, and we hope that this question will be considered at the forthcoming session of the General Assembly.

We ask God to give you wisdom in your efforts and we ask you, Sir, to accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Rev. Orestes González Cruz
President

(Signed) Rita Oliva Valdés
Executive Secretary
Cuban Ecumenical Council

UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/193/Add.7
13 September 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/SPANISH

Forty-sixth session

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NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA

Letter dated 11 September 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On 21 August last, the Department of State of the United States of America announced the official position of the United States Government on our request for the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly of an item on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

In a statement issued on that day, the above-mentioned Department stated: "The United States embargo of Cuba is not an appropriate issue for discussion at the United Nations. Every Government has a right and a responsibility to choose the Governments with which it wishes to have commercial and political relations." With reference to the letter which I addressed to you on 16 August last (A/46/193), the statement goes on to say: "Ambassador Alarcón is mistaken in calling the embargo a blockade. A blockade implies that the United States is taking action to prevent other countries from trading with Cuba. That is clearly not the case."

I wish, however, to draw briefly to your attention some of the current provisions of United States law which the Department of State purposely omitted in its statement and which clearly show that legislative action and other measures have been taken to obstruct and prevent other countries from developing trading relations with Cuba, thereby unquestionably implementing a policy of blockade. As an example that illustrates the nature of the blockade imposed by the United States of America against our country, I also attach a list of commercial transactions with third country companies, through which Cuba sought to obtain medical equipment and products, which were interrupted

or simply cancelled as a result of the embargo and pressure from the Government of the United States of America.

In its official statement the United States Government contradicts United States law and actions, and it is inconsistent when it adverts to the right of the Government to choose the Governments with which it wishes to have commercial and political relations. Maybe it has not realized that the other members of the international community also have that right and that it is therefore up to them, not to the United States of America, to decide whether to have this type of relations with our country?

As stated in the explanatory memorandum requesting the inclusion of this item, the blockade imposed by the United States is an essential element of that country's aggressive policy against Cuba the declared objective of which is to impose on Cuba a political, social and economic system which the United States authorities consider to be more acceptable.

Consideration of this matter by the General Assembly is appropriate and is inherently justified by the principles and purposes upon which the United Nations is based.

In view of the relevance of the attached documents (see annex) and of this letter to the consideration of the inclusion of the item, I should be grateful if you would circulate them among all Member States as documents of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON de QUESADA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

The United States recently has stated that "the basic goal of [its trade and financial] sanctions is to isolate Cuba economically and deprive it of United States dollars" (The United States Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Cuba: What You Need to Know About the U.S. Embargo (June 20, 1991)). Consistent with this goal, the United States has gone well beyond suspending commerce between its own citizens and Cuba to seek the most sweeping extraterritorial application of its embargo laws. In doing so, it has exceeded the confines of its national jurisdiction under international law and has violated the sovereignty of other States.

Summarized below are the major respects in which the United States seeks extraterritorial application of its embargo laws against Cuba.

1. The United States prohibits a corporation or other business entity organized under the laws of a third country and located and doing business in that country from exporting to Cuba products manufactured wholly in that third country, but which incorporate any United States component part or material. This is so irrespective of whether the component part or material has been completely transformed in the new product. Exceptions are possible only upon application by the third-country company demonstrating that the United States-origin component parts or materials constitute 20 per cent or less of the value of the product (Source: 15 Code of Federal Regulations §774.1; 15 Code of Federal Regulations §785.1).

2. The United States prohibits nationals of third countries from re-exporting United States origin goods to Cuba unless their re-exportation is specificially approved by the United States Department of Commerce. It is the policy and practice of the United States Commerce Department to deny approval. It makes no difference whether or not the third-country national originally obtained the goods for resale or how long the third-country national has owned the goods (Source: 15 Code of Federal Regulations §774.1).

3. The re-exportation restrictions apply equally to United States technical data, that is, information in any form, tangible or intangible, which can be used in the design, production or manufacture of products. Under the applicable restrictions, a third-country national may not re-export to Cuba technical data that originally was exported from the United States. Moreover, in many instances third-country nationals may not export products manufactured wholly in the third country and containing no United States components or materials simply because the products were produced by use of United States-origin technical data (Source: 15 Code of Federal Regulations §779.1; 15 Code of Federal Regulations §779.8; 15 Code of Federal Regulations §779.4).

4. The United States asserts the power to extend the embargo to corporations and other business entities organized under the laws of third countries and located and doing business in those countries simply because

they are owned or controlled by United States corporations or persons. A third-country company, moreover, may be found to be "controlled" by a United States entity and hence subject to the embargo even when the United States ownership interest in the company is a minority share. The concept of "control" is applied flexibly and leaves the United States Government wide discretion in its enforcement.

Current United States Government policy is to permit third-country companies owned or controlled by United States entities to engage in import and export transactions with Cuban nationals. A wide range of commercial transactions are still prohibited, however, including investments by the third-country company in Cuba, financing Cuban commercial activities, joint ventures with Cuban companies and other normal commercial transactions.

Furthermore, even the import and export transactions that are permitted are subject to strict limitations. The third-country company must apply to the United States Treasury Department for a licence to enter into these transactions. In order to obtain a licence, the third-country company must demonstrate that it operates independently of the head office in the type of transactions for which the licence is sought; that no officer or employee of the head office has had or will have any involvement whatsoever in the licensed transaction; that the transaction will not involve United States dollar accounts or dollar financing; and that any financing or extension of credit by the third-country company will comply with the Treasury Department's strict limitations. The United States Government has acknowledged that these restrictions prevent many third-country companies from seeking licences.

In addition, this exception for third-country companies, limited as it is, has no application to branches of United States companies which are operating and licensed to do business in third companies. The embargo prohibitions continue to apply to them in full. The exception only applies to companies which are separately incorporated in a third country (Source: 31 Code of Federal Regulations §515.559; 31 Code of Federal Regulations §515.329; Testimony before United States Congress of Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control Newcomb, 2 August 1989).

5. The United States extends the embargo to third country corporations and other business entities located and doing business in those countries if there is even a minority participation by Cuban nationals. Even as little as 25 per cent ownership by Cuban nationals may be sufficient to subject the third-country company to the embargo. Such companies are considered "Cuban nationals" for all purposes and hence may not have any financial or commercial dealings with the United States or United States nationals. Any property the company may have in the United States will be frozen (Source: 31 Code of Federal Regulations §515.302).

6. The United States prohibits third-country banks from maintaining United States dollar-denominated accounts for Cuba or Cuban nationals. It also prohibits any use of United States currency or United States dollar-denominated accounts in transactions between third-country nationals

and Cuban nationals (Source: United States State Department, Background Briefing to Latin America Embassies, 12 July 1963; Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Robert Carswell, Conference on the Internationalization of the Capital Markets, March 1981; Comptroller General's Report to the Congress of the United States, 14 November 1980).

7. The United States bars the importation of goods manufactured in a third country by a company organized under the laws of that country which are made of or derived even in part from any article which is a growth, produce or manufacture of Cuba. It makes no difference whether the Cuban article incorporated in the third-country product is only a raw material used in manufacturing the product, is found only in trace amounts or has been thoroughly transformed in the process of manufacture (Source: 31 Code of Federal Regulations §§515.204).

8. The United States bars the importation of all goods which originally were the growth, produce or manufacture of Cuba regardless of whether the present owner is a third-country national, there is no current Cuban interest in the goods and no matter how long they have been owned by the third-country national (Source: 31 Code of Federal Regulations §515.204).

9. The United States, by administrative fiat, has declared that literally hundreds of corporations and other business entities organized under the laws of third countries and located and doing business in those countries are "specially designated" nationals of Cuba. Upon the issuance of such a declaration, all of the prohibitions of the embargo applicable to Cuban nationals automatically apply to the "specially designated" entity, and hence no United States national may have any commercial or financial dealings with the designated entity and all of its property located in the United States is frozen. The ground for designation, unsupported by any judicial findings, is that the designated company has acted on behalf of the Government of Cuba or is owned or controlled directly or indirectly by the Government of Cuba.

The United States on occasion has withdrawn a designation in response to the protest of the affected third-country company or its government, effectively conceding it acted erroneously. The purpose of the United States none the less was achieved, as the threat of being designated has had a coercive impact upon these and other companies, dissuading some from dealing with Cuba for fear of being designated (Source: 31 Code of Federal Regulations §515.306).

10. United States law requires United States representatives to the principal international financial institutions to oppose the granting of any loans or other financial support to Cuba. The affected international financial institutions include the Inter-American Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Development Association and the International Monetary Fund (Source: 22 United States Code §283r; 22 United States Code §284j; 22 U.S.C. §286aa).

11. The United States Senate recently approved measures that would extend the extraterritorial reach of the embargo even further. These initiatives are meant to have a coercive impact on the policies of third countries whether or not they are enacted into law at this time. One such measure would reverse the current practice of permitting the foreign subsidiaries of United States companies to engage in limited export-import transactions with Cuba. Other measures target specific countries that are Cuba's current economic partners. They would require those countries to cease all direct or indirect assistance to Cuba or face reprisals, such as exclusion from significant United States trade and financial programmes and the United States blocking support from international financial institutions. The coercive effect of these pending measures is heightened by the past practice of the United States - relaxed only in the face of international protest - of prohibiting United States-owned third-country subsidiaries from engaging in trade with Cuba, of denying economic assistance to any country which itself furnished assistance to Cuba and of denying assistance to any country which permitted its vessels and aircraft to transport goods to or from Cuba (Source: Senate Bill No. 1435, sections 517, 902 and 2007, adopted 26 July 1991; 22 United States Code Sections 2730 (a) (1974)).

12. In addition to the measures enacted or proposed to be enacted into United States law, a United States policy aimed to pressure third-country Governments and companies to sever ties with Cuba or face the consequences has been documented by research and press accounts published in the United States, Cuba and other countries (Source: "Cuba Woos Capitalists Feebly, Driven by Need Instead of Desire," The Wall Street Journal, 11 September 1991, p. A-13).

APPENDIX

Some trade operations for the purchase of spare parts, medical and lab equipment for which the United States Treasury Department refused export licences

Firms from third countries which trade with Cuba

Country: Federal Republic of Germany (currently Germany)

Supplier: SIEMENS AG

Products: Gammacameras: equipment for use in nuclear medicine to diagnose different pathologies by measuring different body densities. Colored Doppler Ultrasound Sonoline S1-1200: a machine used to diagnose cardiovascular diseases. Magnetic Nuclear Resonance System: diagnostic equipment which is used in addition to X-rays or tomography, in pathologies which are unable to be diagnosed using the above equipment.

Country: Sweden

Supplier: LKB

Products: Electrophoresis laboratory equipment: used to determine blood protein and hormone levels. Chromatography Columns: attachments for chromatography machines for use in research related to medications, proteins, fats, etc.

Country: Japan

Supplier: Toshiba Corporation

Product: Colored Doppler Ultrasound SSH-65A: a machine used to diagnose cardiovascular pathologies.

Country: Japan

Supplier: Nihon Kohden

Product: Neuropack IV: machine for the study of neurophysiological diseases. Important in the diagnosis of neurological and ophthalmologic illnesses.

Country: France

Supplier: CGR (Thompson Group CGR; this firm was acquired by General Electric)

Product: spare parts for X-ray machines. There are an extensive number of these machines in the country

Country: Argentina

Supplier: MEDIX

Product: spare parts for cleaning dialysis machines used in nephrology, made in the United States by Mesa Medical Incorporated, model MM-1000. Spare parts for ophthalmologic ultrasounds, Ultrascan B System 4 models.